DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 218 604 CS 006 755

AUTHOR Sheppard, Valerie
TITLE Give All Ages a Look at a Mother Goose Book!
PUB DATE Mar 82
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Texas State Council Conference of the International Reading Association (10th, El Paso, TX, March 11-13, 1982).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Books; Childrens Literature; Class Activities; Creative Writing; Elementary Education; *Language Arts; Oral Language; *Reading Instruction; Student Motivation
IDENTIFIERS *Mother Goose; *Nursery Rhymes

ABSTRACT

Preschool children respond to the rhythm and rhyme of Mother Goose and are enchanted with the likable characters, quick actions, and humorous animals. If shared with enthusiasm, Mother Goose books may also be used to teach older children creative writing skills and research techniques. In the primary grades, promoting children's confidence in their reading capabilities motivates them to read more, and if the children are familiar with the Mother Goose rhymes, then reading them successfully in a readers' theatre format, will take little effort. Comparisons of different illustrations for the same rhymes give children an opportunity to improve visual literacy as well as additional practice in reading. In the intermediate grades, tongue twisters, "daffynitions," spoonerisms, and malapropisms provide the necessary language for creative writing experiences. Older students can also research the origins of the rhymes and debate the true identification of Mother Goose. They might jot down their remembrances of the rhymes recited orally before encountering the many different versions of the same verse. Mother Goose is also for children of all ages as a prelude to poetry, introducing them to a form of writing that is different from prose. (Several editions of Mother Goose rhymes are suggested throughout the text.) (HTH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED218604

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Valerie Sheppard
3722 Grennoch
Houston, Texas 77025

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Valerie Sheppard
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

GIVE ALL AGES A LOOK AT A MOTHER GOOSE BOOK!

Mother Goose rhymes have been in print in the United States for over two hundred years now with little revision. Ask anyone over three to name a Mother Goose dittie and they will probably not only rattle off several titles but also quote verses verbatum. What a shame, then, that nursery rhymes traditionally have been relegated to the nursery. With all of the excellent editions of Mother Goose books available, the bird should be allowed to fly through all grade levels teaching a variety of communication skills.

Typically, Mother Goose books are used in the lower grades to teach oral language development and beginning reading skills. If shared with enthusiasm, the books may also be used to teach older children creative writing skills and research techniques.

ORAL LANGUAGE IN PRE SCHOOLS

Children as early as a year old respond to the rhythm and rhyme in Mother Goose. Pre-schoolers are also enchanted with the likable characters, quick action, and humorous animals ever

CS006755

bountiful in Mother Goose. Because the verses are usually short, memorization comes naturally as children repeat the chants. The rhythmic verses rich in alliteration, personification and rhyme are patterns which find a way into the young child's increasing oral vocabulary. Occasionally, curious children wonder aloud about "curds and whey" which provides another opportunity for language growth.

Besides chanting or singing the rhymes, young children automatically sway to the rhythm. Plenty of time for pantomiming the actions or playing musical instruments while reciting the verses should be encouraged.

Visual representation of the ditties delight children in this age range. If encouraged to critically view the varied illustrations, growth in visual literacy and reading readiness will take place. Books with few rhymes and large corresponding illustrations per page are preferable for sharing in groups. Brian Wildsmith's Mother Goose and The Tall Book of Mother Goose are superb for sharing.

Brian Wildsmith's Mother Goose by Brian Wildsmith will easily capture the attention of small ones with its large, colorful collage-like watercolors. The book opens with an enormous childish drawing of Humpty Dumpty in a multi-colored costume with the verse right below. This format exists throughout the collection of familiar rhymes.

The Tall Book of Mother Goose by Feodor Rojankovsky follows much the same format as Wildsmith's book. Some notable differences can be found in the larger than life, comical illustrations and a few obscure rhymes. On one page, a modern little Miss Muffet

sitting on a green stool is so frightened by the spider she is spilling curds and whey all over her shiny red shoes.

Two classics still extremely popular with the very young are The Real Mother Goose and A Pocket Full of Posies. The Real Mother Goose by Blanche Fisher Wright was first published in 1916. Of the one hundred sixty illustrations, many are vividly colored full page scenes of old fashioned characters and events. The collection of over two hundred fifty rhymes is bound to entertain children again and again.

Eighteenth century home life becomes real in Marquerite de Angeli's A Pocket Full of Posies published in 1954. Although the book is less than thirty pages long, there are twelve full page illustrations of the most popular Mother Goose rhymes. As many as eight rhymes can be found on a page, yet only one corresponds to the illustration. This may be confusing if shared with groups of children. The individual child, however, will want to browse through this charming book.

BEGINNING READING IN PRIMARY GRADES

The single greatest achievement of the primary level child is learning to read. A Reader's Theatre of Mother Goose rhymes assures successful dramatizations. Children love to ham up "Jack and Jill" or "The Three Little Kittens"; yet, with scripts, they will also develop oral reading skills. Promoting children's confidence of reading capabilities stimulates a motivation to read more. What better books to use for practice in oral and silent reading than the single rhyme or thematic editions of Mother Goose. If children are familiar with the ditties presented in the editions, reading them successfully will take little effort. Some

marvelous books for this purpose have been illustrated by Susan Jeffers, Peter Spier, Paul Galdone, and Arnold Lobel.

Three Jovial Huntsmen and If Wishes Were Horses by Susan Jeffers are beautiful depictions of a single rhyme or single theme combining a few rhymes. In both books, Ms. Jeffers first did pen-and-ink drawings, then added atmospheric color. Nature and animals in muted tones flow through the pages of very few words. The books are irresistable.

Peter Spier provides children a historic glimpse of London in London Bridge is Falling Down and of America in To Market! To Market! His very detailed drawings will cause children to pause although the texts are simple. In To Market! To Market! Spier uses a few carefully selected rhymes to paint a picture of the farmer's day.

For humor, Paul Galdone's drawings for Tom, Tom The Piper's Son are unbeatable. The gaily colored illustrations of dancing animals are sure to capture children's attentions. There are a few difficult words, such as "considering" and "tuition" but the rest of the text should prove easy sailing for most beginning readers.

Comparisons of the same rhyme give children an opportunity to improve visual literacy as well as additional practice in reading. After reading Paul Galdone's Old Mother Hubbard and Her Dog, where the dog puts a kitten on his lap and feeds it with a spoon, children may want to see how Arnold Lobel depicts the same scene. In The Comic Adventures of Old Mother Hubbard and Her Dog, Lobel envisions a dog waiter with a tray of mice serving a kitten seated at an elegant table. Of course, children who are

familiar with the verses will find either book a breeze to read.

CREATIVE WRITING IN INTERMEDIATE GRADES

Children in the intermediate grades may not pick up Mother Goose collections for pleasure reading for fear of appearing babyish; but, if the collections are shared for a purpose, older children are sure to delight in the books.

The intermediate age child relishes playing with language in a humorous vein. Tongue twisters, daffynitions, spoonerisms and malapropisms provide the needed excuses for giggles. The necessary language for such writing experiences abounds in collections of Mother Goose rhymes. After perusing rhymes, children might try writing tongue twisters for rhymes. For example, a tongue twister of "Miss Muffet" might sound like: Miss Muffet might mangle monstrous marsupials over mannerly, miniature spiders. When unusual words are encountered in the ditties, unusual daffynitions may be written. A daffynition for "tuffet" might be: A dried fruit which has become sitable though inedible, sometimes written as "tough fig". When younger, students may have recited rhymes substituting similar sounding words or phrases for unfamiliar ones. Now they may want to write down their humorous malapropisms and sponnerisms. It is just possible a child thought Miss Muffet sat on a "tough fig" rather than a "tuffet".

Two collections which will provide all of the necessary nursery rhymes for creative writing exercises are The Mother Goose Treasury and The Mother Goose Book. Raymond Briggs' The Mother Goose Treasury includes over four hundred rhymes and twice as many illustrations. The book has an attractive unity although a mixture of illustrations, from small line drawings to large,

brightly colored pictures, are present. A wonderful mixture of rhymes is also present, from the old familiars to "Jumping Joan" and "The Love-Sick Frog".

The Provensen's have gone back to the traditional style of Mother Goose illustrations popular in the late nineteenth century in The Mother Goose Book. Their unique sense of design in the subject matter groupings of over one hundred fifty rhymes comes alive in the layouts. Older children will not only want to use the rhymes as a source for creative writing, but may want to mimic the beautiful illustrations.

RESEARCH IN THE MIDDLE GRADES

Controversy over origins of the rhymes and the true identification of Mother Goose exists today. Much has been written by historians in an attempt to understand the universal appeal and inception of nursery rhymes. Many rhymes were not only early games or chants for children, but remnants of tavern and street cries or customary adult rituals. As older students research the sources of rhymes, conflicting information will become apparent. At this point, reasoning through facts and opinions becomes essential. Actual debates may take place as teams of students argue for Goose-footed Bertha, mother of Charlemagne, over Elizabeth Vergoose of Boston as the "real" Mother Goose. Students might jot down their rememberances of the rhymes recited orally before encountering the many versions of a single rhyme in print. The oral transmission, with its universal similarities and differences, will intrigue students into a questioning of traditions.

No in depth study can take place without a copy of Peter and Iona Opie's The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes. They have

probably assembled and edited everything already in print about nursery rhymes plus a large amount of previously unpublished material. Besides an introduction, they have included "nursery rhymes arranged in alphabetical order according to the most prominent word" and "an index of notable figures associated with the invention, diffusion, or illustration of nursery rhymes".

Once students discover the parodies presumable written about famous folks through the ditties, they may really enjoy A Great Big Ugly Man Came Up and Tied His Horse to Me, illustrated by Wallace Tripp. The zany illustrations and nonsense verses might be enjoyed by any age child, but the older student will catch the humor as well in such drawings as the one of W. C. Fields on Dapple Gray going to an alehouse a mile out of the way.

Mother Goose is for all children, regardless of age, as a readiness to poetry. The rhythm, rhyme, and poetic devices in the jingles introduce children of all ages to a form of writing other than prose. Whether children listen to, recite, read, write, or research Mother Goose nursery rhymes, they will be delighted with, what Cornelia Meigs testifies is, "an indestructible treasure of the human race".

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Briggs, Raymond. The Mother Goose Treasury. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1966.

de Angli, Marquerite. A Pocket Full of Posies. New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1954.

Galdone, Paul. Old Mother Hubbard and Her Dog. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1960.

Galdone, Paul. Tom, Tom The Piper's Son. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1964.

Jeffers, Susan. If Wishes Were Horses. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1979.

Jeffers, Susan. A Mother Goose Rhyme - Three Jovial Huntsmen. Scarsdale, New York: Bradbury Press, 1973.

Lobel, Arnold. The Comic Adventures of Old Mother Hubbard and Her Dog. New Jersey: Bradbury Press, 1968.

Meigs, Cornelia and Eaton, Nesbitt, and Viguers. A Critical History of Children's Literature. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1969.

Opie, Iona and Peter (eds.). The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951.

Provensen, Alice and Martin. The Mother Goose Book. New York: Random House, 1976.

Rojankovsky, Feodor. The Tall Book of Mother Goose. New York: Harper and Row, 1942.

Spier, Peter. London Bridge is Falling Down. New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967.

Spier, Peter. To Market! To Market! New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967.

Tripp, Walace. A Great Big Ugly Man Came Up and Tied His Horse to Me. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1973.

Wildsmith, Brian. Brian Wildsmith's Mother Goose. New York: Franklin Watts, 1964.

Wright, Blanche Fisher. The Real Mother Goose. New York: Rand McNally & Co., 1916.